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Chandler E. Potter. 1869.

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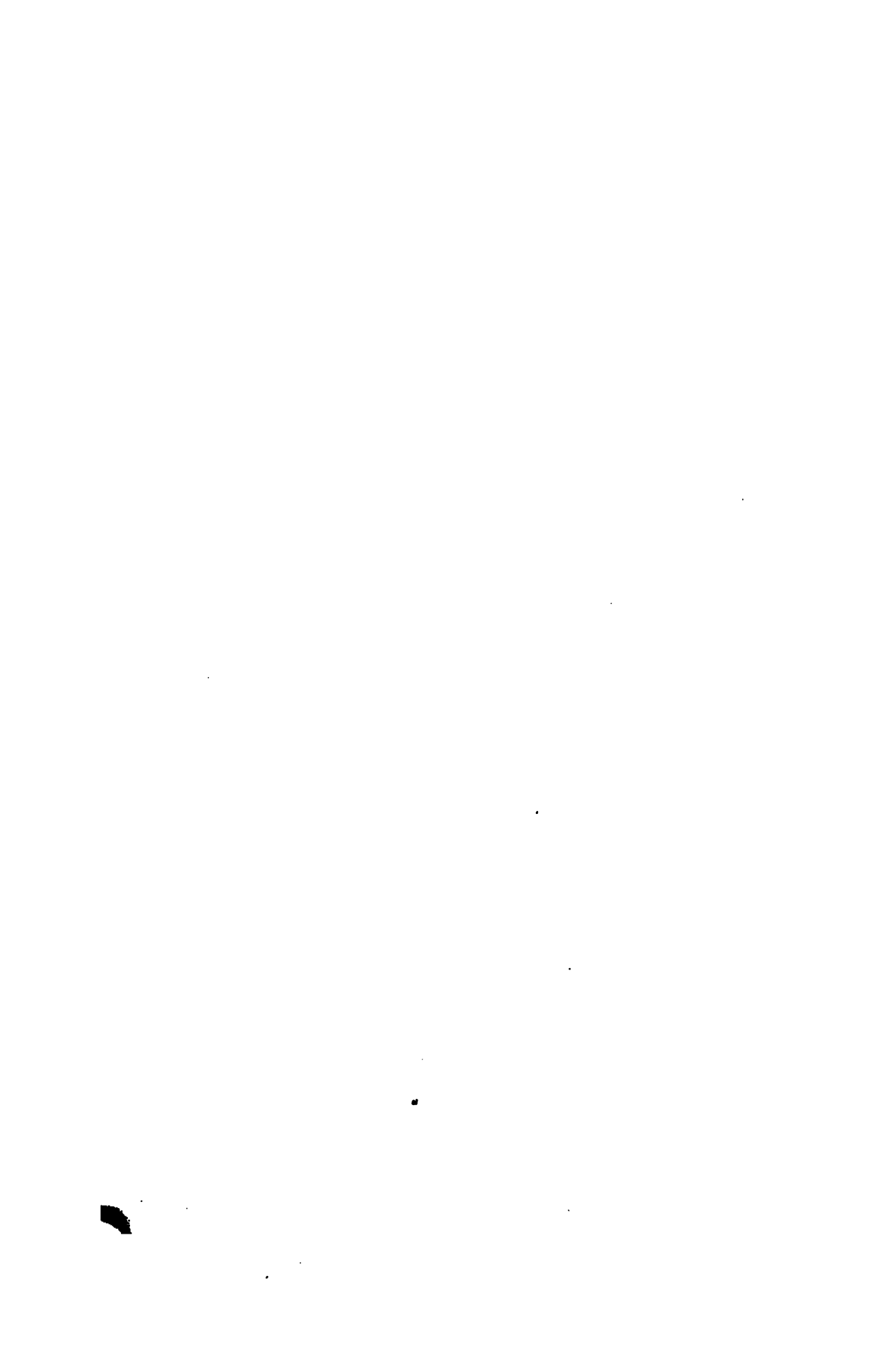
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Biographical Sketch

OF

HON. CHANDLER E. POTTER,

LATE OF

HILLSBOROUGH, N. H.

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CONCORD, N. H.:

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

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CHANDLER EASTMAN POTTER was born in Concord, N. H., in that portion of the town known as East Concord, March 7, 1807. His ancestors were among the early settlers of New-England. On his father's side, he was descended from Robert Potter, of Lynn, Mass., who came to America from the city of Coventry, England, in 1630. His grandfather, Richard Potter, went from Ipswich, Mass., to Concord, in 1771, and, in company with his brother, purchased a tract of land on the borders of Turtle pond in the parish of East Concord. His father, Joseph Potter, was born in 1772, and died in 1853. His mother, Ann Drake, was the daughter of Thomas Drake, formerly of Hampton, N. H. She was born in 1774, was married to Joseph Potter in 1793, and died in 1844.

Col. Potter, the subject of this memoir, was the youngest of four sons. He was reared in a manner common to those who were born in a New-England community half a century ago. At that period of our country's history the resources of wealth were not sufficiently developed to afford the new settlers those comforts and conveniences of life which are at this era of national prosperity so widely diffused. His father, a farmer in comfortable but not affluent circumstances, found it impossible to afford him other than limited privileges of obtaining an education; he was consequently employed in labor on the farm or attending the district school. At the age of eighteen he attended the Academy at Pembroke, at that time and subsequently one of the best



literary institutions in the State. Here he remained until he was prepared for College. He entered the Freshman class at Dartmouth College, in Hanover, in 1827. He was a diligent student, and soon took a high rank among his classmates. After his graduation, in 1831, he opened a select high school in Concord, and taught until his removal to Portsmouth, where he took charge of the High School. He was eminently successful, easily securing the affection and esteem of his pupils, and is gratefully remembered by many as a kind, faithful, efficient teacher. A strong love of antiquities and nature distinguished him from his fellow-men. He had a just poetic perception: The dark rocks, the beautiful lakes, the legends of the Red Men, were the peaceful subjects he chose for his muse. He early manifested a love of nature and a thirst for knowledge. He was especially interested in the stories of heroic deeds and virtues of the great and good who had figured in the history of the world in the past, and early collected facts worthy to be remembered. He entertained profound respect and reverence for the patriots who fought and suffered in securing the liberties of our country. This sentiment of veneration for the founders of our institutions thus early awakened was a conspicuous element in his character, and had much to do in giving shape to his career in after life. He was also delighted in listening to accounts of the Indians who dwelt along the banks of the Merrimack. He often scoured the plains in the vicinity to gather the bones, arrows, implements and other relics of the noble sons of the forest.

In 1835 he was chosen representative to the Legislature from Portsmouth. On the Fourth of July of the same year, he delivered an oration before the citizens of Portsmouth. This oration, which was subsequently published, was a powerful and spirited defense of the doctrine that a government should be administered for the benefit of the whole people and not in the interest of a class or a favored few. He showed with great force and clearness that the rights and liberties of the people may be wrested from them by the cunning and ambitious, if they fail in intelligence or cease

to maintain the strictest vigilance. During his residence in Portsmouth he commenced the study of the law in the office of Ichabod Bartlett, and subsequently finished his course with Pierce & Fowler, at Concord.

In 1843 he practiced law at East Concord. Although educated for the law, yet his taste and early habits induced him to relinquish his profession and engage in literary and historical pursuits; removing to Manchester, where he made his début as editor, he became editor and proprietor of the *Manchester Democrat*, and retained this position until 1848. While in charge of this paper, Col. Potter supported the principles of the Democratic party. As a political writer he exhibited a profound knowledge of the principles of Government, and defended his views with so much ability and spirit that his journal was regarded as one of the most influential in the State. Its columns were frequently enriched with able articles from his pen upon matters pertaining to science, particularly to Natural History. He published many very valuable original articles on the nature and habits of the wild beasts, birds, reptiles and fishes, of his native State. Articles on education and agriculture occupied a corner of his sheet. His original sketches illustrating the history of New-Hampshire and her eminent sons, gave increased interest to his paper.

In June, 1848, he was appointed Judge of the Police Court in Manchester, filling the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Hon. Samuel D. Bell. He served in this office during a period of seven years. As the head of this Court he discharged his duties with marked ability and entire impartiality. Though a man of decided political opinions, it is the universal testimony of his political opponents who had relations with him as a Judge, that he held the scales of justice with an even hand, and never suffered his prejudices to influence his judgment in the slightest degree. Wherever truth would lead he dared to follow, and cared not if he shook the world with his opinions, if he scattered the clouds and let in the light. In 1850, one of the most remarkable cases in the annals of crime in the State of New-Hamp-

shire, came before him for examination. The hearing lasted upward of a month, and created intense excitement. Throughout this long and tedious examination, Judge Potter presided with acknowledged ability and fairness. We bear earnest and willing testimony to his high public and private virtues, to his distinguished ability and his mature judgment, his manifest desire for the attainment of exact justice and his untiring assiduity and fidelity in his labors. He did "with his might whatever his hands found to do." His dignified courtesy of manner, without distinction of person, and his readiness to subject himself rather than others, to inconvenience in the transaction of business, were uniform and unflinching.

His wit was unbounded, and flowed from him as naturally as his breath. Consequently he was the delight of the social circle, especially as his humor was governed by his amiability, so that the feelings of his companions were never wounded by sarcasm or ridicule. His generosity like his wit knew no bounds. He often remarked, "if I give to all I shall be sure to hit the right." While holding the office of Judge, Col. Potter was editor of the *Farmer's Monthly Visitor*, and a weekly journal called the *Granite Farmer*. The files of these journals bear evidence of his original powers of observation and study. As an agricultural writer, Col. Potter was not content to adopt the opinion of others. He boldly attacked many errors which prevailed in regard to this branch of industry, and made many suggestions of practical value. In these journals he also illustrated his taste for history and biography.

In 1854, a military association was formed at Manchester, called the *Amoskeag Veterans*. Col. Potter, with others, embraced the opportunity to do honor to the memory of the military heroes of his native State who defended the early colonies and aided in establishing our national independence. This corps was composed of the most prominent and influential citizens of the city and State. The uniform adopted was patterned from that of the "Father of his Country," Washington. The first public parade of this corps took

place Feb. 22, 1855, the anniversary of the birth of Washington. The event called together a large concourse of people from all parts of the State. The Governor, accompanied by his staff, and many distinguished citizens, were present.

Col. Potter delivered an eloquent address at that time. Extracts will betray the spirit which animated the orator on the occasion :

“The principles for which Washington and his brave companions, those veterans of an iron will and a former ‘age, fought, periled life and fortune, are the same *now* as then, and will remain unchanged so long as time endures :—Liberty and equality ; the welfare of the whole community ; the happiness of the humblest as well as the highest individual ; impartial and distributive justice to all ; a monopoly of office or honor to no class ; hereditary rank or distinction to none ; toleration to all sects ; intolerance to none save tyrants : in a word, this Republic should be the land of the free and the home of the oppressed.

“Opinions may change, habits may vary, but principles *never*. They are based upon eternal right and subject to no variation. They spring from the immutable constitution of things, and are no more subject to change than the Omnipotent Author of all things. Men may become recreant to principle, may desert liberty and virtue, but the principle, Liberty and Virtue remain the same. \* \* \* The principles for which our fathers periled life and fortune remaining the same, unchanged and unvaried, it behooves us, as men, men in whom the fires of an unhallowed ambition should have been checked, if not quenched by the application of cool reason and mature judgment, to look about us and examine with care and circumspection, lest our principles of action shall become involved in the mists of sophistry, and we ourselves be found following some *ignes fatui*, engendered in the miasmal pools of moral and political obliquity which shine only to bewilder and lead only to destroy.

“The purpose : we have met on this day, hallowed by so many inspiring and ennobling considerations, for the purpose of fostering a proper military spirit, and cultivating social intercourse.

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"Our constitution recognizes these purposes, when it declares the objects of the Association to be: 'For military parade, protection of life and property; the preservation of peace, and for social enjoyment.'" Aftershowing that man, being a social being, will become misanthropic and morose unless his social affections are cultivated, he proceeds to argue that without the preservation of peace, without protection to property and life, the pleasures flowing from this source can not be enjoyed. "To secure these is the mission of the citizen soldier. 'The citizen soldier is alone the one on which our republic can rely for protection.'

"To foster the true spirit of the citizen soldier, that spirit that dictates an effective organization of the people, for military purposes, as a means of preserving public quiet and peace, and for destroying mankind, is one of the main objects of this Association. \* \* Amoskeag Veterans! What associations, what remembrances cluster about that name, Amoskeag! It is a word in the language of which Humboldt has said he was in doubt, such is the beauty and philosophy of its construction, whether it was the language of a people first emerging from a normal state to one of civilization, or that of a people, the debris of some great nation, hastening toward annihilation. And the doubt remains. But the people are among the things that have been. Very little remains of them to tell of their proud supremacy in the valley of the Merrimack. \* \* \* \*

"With the decline of savage rule at Amoskeag, came into notice the borderers, those outposts of civilization, hardy, brave, daring men. Among these, matured amid the toils and dangers of frontier life, were men of skill, judgment, and consequent distinction.

"In addition to the natural perils of the wilderness and the incessant labor necessary to bring it into a state of productiveness, these borderers had more labors to endure and dangers to encounter. The toil of incessant preparation for defense, and the continued danger of the keen edge of the scalping knife and tomahawk of the savage, while they harrassed and appalled the stoutest hearts, yet produced a

race for the times, one impatient of no toil and knowing no danger."

After dwelling at considerable length upon the history of the early pioneers of civilization in this portion of New-Hampshire, and their revolutionary successors, Col. Potter concludes his oration as follows :

"Such were some of the veterans of Amoskeag ! Their deeds of valor should be held in grateful remembrance. To assist in doing this, you have assumed a name to which they were pre-eminently entitled. It is strikingly appropriate. See to it that we preserve its appropriateness.

"Of iron will, indomitable courage, unflinching energy, untiring industry and stern integrity, they were the men for the times and the place. The occasions that demanded the development of such traits of character may never again arise, but the principles for which they were developed are still the same. They had felt the iron heel of oppression upon them, crushing the joints and the marrow, forcing out the very life blood. They flew to arms,—fought and conquered. Oppression is still abroad, in other guise, booted and spurred, ready to rush with iron tramp over its prostrate victims. Veterans ! feeling his iron heel, shall we oppose neither let or hindrance to his mad career ? If we do not, we are unworthy the name we have assumed—Amoskeag Veterans.

"The Veterans of Amoskeag, with their illustrious compatriots won freedom of self-government, freedom to worship God ; an asylum for the down trodden and oppressed, and, unless we have the energy, the courage, to preserve what they won at the price of so much toil and suffering, we are unworthy of their name. If there be no opportunity for us to imitate their stern virtues, we can, at least, if we will, leave their principles *unstained*, and then, when we shall receive the final order from the stern Chieftain, Death, we shall be able to meet the summons with the happy-consciousness of having done our whole duty, and nothing but our duty."

In the winter after the corps was organized, Col. Potter was elected its commander. In December, the Veterans,

with full ranks, visited the national capital—Washington. The various cities through which they passed on their route vied with each other in doing honor to the descendants of the patriots who fought on revolutionary fields with Washington, and Green, and Knox, and Sumpter, and Schuyler, and other great chieftains. At Worcester, Springfield, New-York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, they received the most flattering attentions. At all these places banquets were given in their honor, by the municipal authorities, and they were met and welcomed by the most distinguished citizens. Their visit to Philadelphia was especially interesting. They were welcomed by the Mayor and City Council, in Independence Hall, where American freedom was first proclaimed. Col. Potter, in reply to the welcoming speech of the Mayor, made a very eloquent, patriotic and thrilling address, which awakened great enthusiasm among those who listened to him.

At Washington, the Veterans were the guests of General Franklin Pierce, the President of the United States. He gave a splendid banquet in their honor, at which many of the most eminent Statesmen of the country were present. The presence of so many of the representative men of his native State, at the seat of government, so far away from his and their homes, of course could not be otherwise than gratifying to the President, and his address, on welcoming them to the Executive Mansion, was long spoken of by the Veterans, and others who were present, as one of the finest specimens of simple, unstudied eloquence, ever listened to on a similar occasion. The response of Col. Potter, who, on behalf of the Veterans, expressed the unalloyed satisfaction which was felt on meeting their distinguished fellow-citizen, was no less eloquent and appropriate.

During this visit of the Veterans, the warmest praises were bestowed upon Col. Potter, the very able, discreet and efficient manner in which he acquitted himself as commander of the battalion, the members were proud to be led by such a commander, whose talents, dignity, courtesy, knowledge and ability, as a public speaker, entitled him to rank with the foremost men of the land.

Col. Potter was a writer of superior abilities and force, both in poetry and prose, and an enthusiastic student of history. Locating at Hillsborough, in 1856, he devoted a portion of his time to agricultural pursuits, editing at the time the agricultural department of the weekly *Mirror*, published at Manchester, and in writing books. "His taste led him chiefly into historical research. As an historian, possessed of extensive and valuable information relating to New-Hampshire, which he diffused with a ready and liberal pen, Mr. Potter could hardly be ranked second to any man in the State. His history of Manchester, published by himself in 1856, containing 763 pages octavo, is a rich storehouse of facts, respecting the rise and growth of that thrifty city. Incorporated into it, also, is valuable information relative to the provincial history of the State, notices of public men, and events of general interest." It is a work exhibiting careful research and great industry. "His last and crowning work, the *Military History of N. H.*, was an arduous labor; but he diligently pursued, and succeeded in arresting from decay, and in disenterring from pay-rolls, old papers, and rubbish of antiquity, such a record as devoted labor might yield. This *Military History* extends from the first settlement in the province, 1623, to the close of the war with Great Britian, in 1812. This work consists of two volumes, and embraces a detailed account of all the wars with the Indians in which the Colonists were engaged. It also contains a full account of campaigns of the old French war; also those of the revolutionary, the war of 1812, and all other conflicts in which New-Hampshire troops were engaged up to that period. The work, beside, contains a very large number of biographical sketches of the eminent men who have been connected with the military organizations of the State. By the patient and critical research of Col. Potter, many interesting facts pertaining to early history of the State are rescued from oblivion and been preserved for the benefit of coming generations."

After his removal to Hillsborough, Col. Potter continued his connection with the Amoskeag Veterans, and a large



portion of his time was their commander. In 1865 the members of the battalion showed their high respect for him by visiting him at his home. The corps marched from the railroad station to the old family mansion of the late Gov. Pierce and Gen. John McNeil, where they were met by Col. Potter. In a very feeling address, he expressed his pleasure at meeting them at his home, and his appreciation of the high compliment which they had bestowed upon him. Subsequently the members of the corps were entertained by their commander at a dinner in a large tent upon the grounds.

During his later years, the Veterans, under his command, visited Newburyport, Portsmouth, and other cities. The last visit of this kind was to the city of Hartford, in the autumn of 1867. The Veterans, on their way, were received with high honor at Worcester and Springfield. At Hartford, they were entertained at a banquet by the city authorities. On this visit, Col. Potter again acquitted himself in so able, judicious and satisfactory a manner that a unanimous vote of thanks was extended to him by the members of the corps, on their return home.

In the spring and summer of 1868, his health had become considerably impaired on account of his excessive literary labors. Having completed his military history of the State, he started, in company with his wife, in July, on a journey to the West. On his way out, his spirits were buoyant, and he felt that his general health was improving, and no one could have believed from his appearance that he was so soon to be removed from earth. He arrived at the city of Flint, Michigan, on Thursday, July 30. He remained in that city, transacting considerable business, until Sunday, August 2. On that day, he received several visitors at the hotel where he lodged, and exhibited in his conversation the same elasticity and intellectual vigor for which he was always remarkable. In the afternoon, after writing several letters, he laid down for the purpose of obtaining a little rest. After sleeping a short time he awoke, and, endeavoring to move his limbs, remarked to his wife that for the first time in his life he found that his muscles refused to obey his will. It

was evident that he had been stricken with paralysis. For a short time he retained his consciousness and was able to articulate. Physicians were summoned and every thing which human ingenuity could suggest was done for his relief. But, alas! all was unavailing. In a few hours he became unconscious, alike of his own dangerous condition and the anxiety and deep sorrow of his wife and other sympathizing friends who gathered about his bedside. He continued in this situation until Monday afternoon, August 3d, when he expired.

Many of the prominent citizens of Flint extended their warmest sympathies to his afflicted wife, and did their utmost to mitigate her woe in that trying hour when she was suddenly deprived of her beloved companion. His remains were tenderly cared for, and prepared to be sent for interment in the soil of his native State. The coffin, containing his lifeless form, arrived at Manchester, August 7, and was received at the station by a deputation of Amoskeag Veterans.

On Saturday, August 8, his funeral took place. The Veterans, in command of Capt. Wm. B. Patten, marched to the railroad station, and, after receiving the remains, a line was formed and marched through some of the principal streets to the residence of Capt. Charles Shedd. At this place Mrs. Potter and other relatives joined the procession, which then proceeded to the Unitarian Church on Merrimack street. Rev. Joseph F. Lovering, of Concord, the Chaplain of the Veterans, conducted the services and made a very appropriate and impressive address. After the services at the church the procession was re-formed and marched to the solemn music of the Manchester Cornet Band to the Valley Cemetery. The burial service was read by the Chaplain, after which all that was mortal of the beloved and honored commander of the Veterans was committed to the grave.

On the return of the Veterans to their armory, these resolutions were passed:

“WHEREAS an inscrutable Providence has seen fit to remove from our midst our loved and chosen commander, and whereas we have now performed the last sad rites of sepulture over his remains, therefore be it

*Resolved*, That in the decease of Colonel CHANDLER E. POTTER, the Amoskeag Veterans have sustained an irreparable loss; that their foremost man, foremost from the beginning, who at all times and under all circumstances, in sunshine and in the storm, unselfishly sought to promote their highest welfare, is no more; and, for each one of us to resolve that, in our day and generation, we will endeavor to follow his example, is the highest tribute we can pay to his memory. We mourn not alone. Society has lost an ornament; the State an historian, whose labors, yet uncompleted, in compiling and preserving her military history, will long outlive our feeble efforts.

*Resolved*, That these resolutions be entered upon our records, and a copy thereof be transmitted to the family of the deceased."

At the time of his death the intellectual powers of Col. Potter were in their fullest strength and activity, and he gave promise that he might continue his usefulness for many years longer. The news of his death created a feeling of great sadness among all classes who knew him.

Col. Potter was a man of noble personal appearance. He was about six feet and four inches in height, and weighed, when in good health, about 280 pounds. He was well proportioned, stood erect, and his walk was firm and dignified. When marching in command of the Amoskeag Veterans, clothed in the old Revolutionary uniform, he was the theme of universal admiration among the observers. He had dark eyes, regular features, and a full, well-toned voice. His head was large, and, in phrenological language, was well balanced. His perceptive organs were very large, showing that he was a close and critical observer, and that his memory of facts in detail was remarkably strong.

One of the most prominent traits of his character was his very warm social nature. Nothing delighted him more than the society of intelligent and worthy men and women, and his feelings toward his friends and those of a congenial spirit were sincere, deep and fraternal.

He was a man "of infinite jest, of most excellent humor," and he had a vast fund of anecdotes ever on hand. His powers of mimicry and imitation were so great that he could easily assume the voice and manners of almost any person.

Hence he was one of the best of story-tellers. He often introduced into his public addresses an appropriate anecdote, and illustrated his point with great effect, and on festive occasions his ready wit and humor never failed to create merriment. He was a man of great enthusiasm, and entered with his whole soul into any subject which he discussed. Hence there was a great charm in his conversation. His mind was ever active, and he had the power of exactly adapting himself to all occasions and circumstances. He also had a faculty of placing himself in just the proper relations to all persons whom he met, whatever might be their tastes or degree of intelligence. When among the learned, he could lead as well as follow, and when in the society of the ignorant and undeveloped, he never assumed airs of superiority, but placed himself on the most intimate and friendly terms with them, and was happy if he could succeed in arousing higher and nobler thoughts and grander conceptions in regard to the world and the ever changing phenomena about them.

He was naturally a Democrat, respected the people, and never desired "to get above them," or wished for more attention from others than he was willing to extend to them.

He became corresponding member of the New-England Historic-Genealogical Society, March 24, 1855. In 1841 he was elected a member of the New-Hampshire Historical Society, and was chosen one of the Vice-Presidents in 1852, in 1855, and 1857. In 1851 he delivered a valuable and interesting discourse before the society upon the aborigines of the country, at the conclusion of which, on motion of Hon. Samuel D. Bell, a vote of thanks was extended to him. Subsequently he read several other interesting essays, one of which was upon the Penacook Indians. Beside these papers he contributed one of the chapters to Col. Schoolcraft's valuable history of the North American Indians. He left many unpublished manuscripts bearing upon the history of New-Hampshire. It was his design to publish a full and complete history of the State, bringing it down to the present times.

He left two sons. His third son, Drown Potter, studied for the bar. At the breaking out of the war of the rebel-

lion he was in the West, and immediately joined the 1st Regiment of Michigan Volunteers, of which he was soon after appointed Quartermaster Sergeant. He was killed, while on duty with his regiment, at Garlick's Landing, by a band of guerillas. He was a young man of fine talents, and was much esteemed by all who knew him.

Though Col. Potter had a commendable ambition, he did not wish to be valued beyond his merits. His warm affection for his family was remarkable. He enjoyed no pleasures, wished to enjoy none, which they did not participate. Even in his hours of unsparing labor, when intense thought was necessary to the business in hand, he loved to have them near him, and had acquired the faculty of sympathizing in their amusements, without suffering his mind to be diverted from his labor. He was happy in his family, and enjoyed life. He felt a just pride in affairs of his town and place of residence, interesting himself in all improvements. He was a man of singular purity of life, generous and hospitable; his house was open and his numerous friends always welcome. He rests from his labors and his works do follow him. From the midst of life's responsibilities he has been suddenly called to a blessed eternity, leaving an irreparable void by his departure in a loving circle of friends, over whom the dark shadow of sorrow has deeply fallen, for he was to all within the sphere of his influence a faithful and unfailing friend. No ostentation sullied the purity of his benevolence. His rare disinterestedness and eminent kindness of heart led him ever to seek opportunities of doing good. So ready and efficient was he that all who had the privilege of his friendship turned to him in emergency with a reliance that was never disappointed. He lived not for himself alone. He had a heart for Justice, for God, and the Right. That heart is still, but it was one of those

*"That rule our spirits from the Urns."*

In 1832 he married Miss C. A. Underwood. Four children blessed this union, three sons and a daughter. November 11, 1856, he married Miss Fanny Maria, daughter of Gen. John McNeil, of Hillsborough, N. H., formerly of the Army. She survives him.



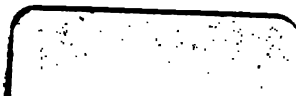


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